

Road planners imagine growth past White Tanks

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A study looking at growth west of the White Tank Mountains proposes new roads and freeways in the far West Valley.

These roads would help accommodate the millions of drivers expected to travel through the White Tanks and in the developing Hassayampa Valley.

The area is bordered by Loop 303 on the east, 459th Avenue on the west, Carefree Highway on the north, and Gila River on the south.

Bob Hazlett, project manager for the Maricopa Association of Governments, discussed the proposals at the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce breakfast Tuesday.

The Interstate 10-Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study is sponsored by MAG, the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Maricopa County Department of Transportation and the cities of Surprise, Goodyear and Buckeye.

The study maps spell out the necessary traffic networks and infrastructure to accommodate the area's growing population.

"We're starting to take a look now at that next ring of growth," Hazlett said.

Buckeye and Surprise eventually are expected to become the third- and fourth-largest cities in the state.

Hazlett said Buckeye's Douglas Ranch, Arizona's largest master-planned community with 83,000 homes, will be the same size as Dayton, Ohio.

At build-out, there are expected to be 2.7 million trips a day north and south of the White Tanks.

One recommendation is to build parkways, which are modeled after roads in Michigan. Parkway are high-capacity roads that can carry up to 100,000 cars a day.

The study also includes proposals for transit systems and a new freeway west of the White Tanks.

Hazlett said the recommendations are not publicly funded at this time.

The study project is in its final phases and will be wrapped up in May. There will be a presentation at the end of May in Buckeye for public comment. The study will go to the MAG Regional Council in September.